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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004391

SIPDIS

NSC FOR THEROUX

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: (C) KUWAITIS STILL UNEASY OVER AL-ONAYZEH ARREST

REF: KUWAIT 4275

Classified By: Frank C. Urbancic, DCM. Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Kuwaiti contacts continue to be concerned about repercussions stemming from the arrest of Iraqi tribal sheikh Mtaib bin Mahrouth bin Hadhal al-Onayzeh. Prominent businessman Fuad al-Ghanim told Charge from London September 21, 2003, that he believed the arrest and detention of al-Onayzeh had been seriously mishandled. He said the perception in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia was that the US was "insulting" the al-Onayzeh tribe which, he emphasized, was the mother tribe of the ruling families al-Saud of Saudia Arabia, the al-Khalifah of Bahrain, and the al-Sabah of Kuwait.

2. (C) Al-Ghanim said he had been in touch with leading families in Iraq in recent days to urge them not to overreact. Despite al-Ghanim's interventions, his contacts told him the anti-American demonstrations were being organized in Baghdad for Monday, September 22, 2003, in reaction to the arrest. Al-Ghanim said that his moderate and liberal contacts in Iraq, Saudia Arabia and Kuwait are reporting consternation at the arrest. They worry that this will breed anti-American sentiment and feed the Islamist propaganda machine. Al-Ghanim emphasized that America's friends in the region here were not in a position to dispute the evidence against the sheikh. They counsel their American friends to deal with him differently. For example, arrest and detention was not perceived as commensurate with al-Onayzeh's exalted position. It would be better, he said, to deal with him in a more traditional way such as house arrest and restrictions on his outside contacts.

3. (C) Al-Ghanim said he had been trying to register these points with all his contacts in London and the US. He has made some high-level presentations which he hopes will be presented to the NSC this week for action.

4. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
JONES